

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CAPE T 00914 01 OF 02 071647Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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O R 071537Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6201
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMCONSUL DURBAN
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 CAPE TOWN 0914

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, SF
SUBJECT: SAG DISTORTION OF ONE-MAN ONE-VOTE CONCEPT

REF: CAPE TOWN 862, CAPE TOWN 878, CAPE TOWN 892,

1. SUMMARY: IN ITS RESPONSE TO NEW US POLICY SPELLED OUT AT MONDALE-VORSTER MEETING IN VIENNA, THE SAG, PARTICULARLY FOREIGN MINISTER PIK BOTHA, HAS ATTEMPTED TO SHIFT FOCUS OF PUBLIC DEBATE AND DISCUSSION AWAY FROM THE CENTRAL ISSUES OF ENDING DISCRIMINATION AND PROVIDING FOR FULL POLITICAL PARTICIPATION, TO THE ALLEGED US "DEMAND" FOR ONE-MAN ONE-VOTE, WHICH SAG DEPICTS AS "SIMPLISTIC" AND "UNREASONABLE" AND WHICH, CONFIDENTIAL

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IF ACCEPTED, WOULD AMOUNT TO "SELF-DESTRUCTION". END SUMMARY.

2. OVER THE PAST WEEK LEADING SAG SPOKESMEN, INCLUDING PRIME MINISTER VORSTER AND FOREIGN MINISTER BOTHA, HAVE SEIZED ON VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE'S STATEMENT DURING VIENNA PRESS CONFERENCE THAT "FULL POLITICAL PARTICIPATION" IS SYNONYMOUS WITH "ONE-MAN ONE-VOTE" TO ARGUE THAT US IS

MAKING IMPOSSIBLE DEMANDS FOR CHANGE IN SA. BOTHA, SPEAKING ON TV PANEL DISCUSSION PROGRAM MAY 31, WENT FURTHER, SAYING THAT MONDALE'S REMARK MEANT A DEMAND FOR ONE-MAN ONE-VOTE IN A SINGLE POLITICAL ENTITY WHICH WOULD RESULT IN "DESTRUCTION" OF THE WHITE MAN.

3. SAG HAS USED ISSUE EFFECTIVELY TO KEEP OPPOSITION OFF BALANCE AND TO DIVERT DISCUSSION FROM THE REAL MESSAGE OF VIENNA, I.E., THAT FUNDAMENTAL TRANSFORMATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIETY BASED ON (A) MOVING AWAY FROM RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, AND (B) PROVIDING FOR FULL POLITICAL PARTICIPATION BY ALL ITS CITIZENS IS ESSENTIAL IF RACE CONFLICT AND DETERIORATION OF RELATIONS WITH THE WEST IS TO BE AVOIDED. OPPOSITION POLITICAL PARTIES AND PRESS, ALONG WITH PUBLIC IN GENERAL, HAVE LARGELY ACCEPTED SAG INTERPRETATION OF US POSITION AND HAVE FELT COMPELLED, IN SPEECHES AND EDITORIALS, TO AGREE THAT US "DEMAND" IS UNACCEPTABLE, WHILE STILL MAINTAINING THAT SOME CHANGE IN SAG POLICY IS REQUIRED.

4. IN PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE VORSTER HAS ARGUED THAT NOT ONLY IS US "DEMAND" UNACCEPTABLE TO NATIONAL PARTY BUT TO OPPOSITION PARTIES AS WELL AND THAT POLICIES ADVOCATED BY THE OPPOSITION, SINCE THEY STOP SHORT OF ONE-MAN ONE-VOTE, WOULD BE UNACCEPTABLE TO US. EVEN THE PROGRESSIVE REFORM PARTY LEADER COLIN EGLIN, IN RECENT SPEECH AT PRP RALLY, SAID ONE-MAN ONE-VOTE WAS UNREALISTIC. NOT SURPRISINGLY, HIS SPEECH WAS GIVEN PROMINENT PLAY ON SAG-CONTROLLED TELEVISION WHICH USUALLY IGNORES OPPOSITION

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STATEMENTS.

5. IN EFFORT TO COUNTER SAG ARGUMENT, LIBERAL CAPE TIMES PUBLISHED ARTICLE JUNE 4 ARGUING THAT US NOT TRYING TO DICTATE ONE-MAN ONE-VOTE IN A UNITARY SYSTEM. ARTICL

NOTED THAT MONDALE COMMENT ON ONE-MAN ONE-VOTE CAME AT VERY END OF PRESS CONFERENCE, QUOTED EARLIER MONDALE STATEMENT IN SAME PRESS CONFERENCE THAT US "DID NOT WANT TO GET INTO POSITION OF PRESCRIBING WHAT PARTICULAR STEPS THEY (SAG) SHOULD BE TAKING" AND CITED AMBASSADOR YOUNG'S STATEMENT AT PRESS CONFERENCE IN JOHANNESBURG ON MAY 22 THAT QUESTIONS SUCH AS MINIMUM VOTER QUALIFICATIONS "ARE QUESTIONS TO BE DETERMINED BY CITIZENS OF SOUTH AFRICA, BLACKS AND WHITES TOGETHER..." (THE USG) HAS RESISTED TRYING TO SET STANDARDS..." IN SPEECH TO CAPE TOWN PRESS CLUB NIGHT OF JUNE 4 (BEING REPORTED DEPARATELY), BOTHA TOOK DIRECT ISSUE WITH CAPE TIMES SAYING THAT US HAS HAD AMPLE TIME TO ISSUE RETRACTION OR CLARIFICATION IF

POLICY IS NOT, IN FACT, ONE-MAN ONE-VOTE IN A UNITARY STATE. TIMES REPLIED JUNE 6 IN EDITORIAL ENTITLED, "WHAT AMERICA WANTS" WHICH RESTATES THE ARGUMENT THAT WHILE ONE-MAN ONE-VOTE IS THE AMERICAN WAY OF UPHOLDING DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES, IT IS APPLIED WITHIN A DECENTRALIZED AND FEDERAL SYSTEM. EDITORIAL NOTES THAT MONDALE SAID NOTHING ABOUT A UNITARY SYSTEM IN SA BUT ARGUES ONE-MAN ONE-VOTE STATEMENT CONTINUES TO CAUSE CONFUSION AND CALLS ON US TO "CLARIFY" THE SITUATION.

6. IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND THE PRESENT CONTROVERSY OVER "ONE-MAN ONE-VOTE," IT IS IMPORTANT TO RECALL THAT LIBERAL WHITES IN SOUTH AFRICA ARE SKITTISH ABOUT THE ISSUE. MANY RECOGNIZE THE MORAL CORRECTNESS OF THE CONCEPT BUT REFRAIN FROM ADVOCATING IT BECAUSE THEY FEAR THAT APPLICATION WOULD RESULT IN THE WHITE MAN BEING OVERSHELMED AND/OR ITS POLITICAL UNACCEPTABILITY WITH THE ELECTORATE. THE ISSUE
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IS THEREFORE PRIMARILY A FUNCTION OF WHITE POLITICS. SAG IS USING IT TO DIVERT ATTENTION FROM THE BASICS POSED AT VIENNA, TO UNDERCUT OPPOSITION DEMANDS FOR CHANGE AND TO RALLY WIDEST POSSIBLE SEGMENT OF WHITE VOTERS BY THREATENING THEM WITH THE BOGEY OF BLACK DOMINATION. BOTHA SPEECH ON JUNE 4 WAS EXPLICIT EXAMPLE OF THIS "SWART GEVAAR" (BLACK PERIL) TACTIC AND MADE DISCERNIBLE IMPRESSION ON AUDIENCE THAT INCLUDED LARGE PROPORTION OF WHITE ENGLISH-SPEAKING JOURNALISTS.

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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O R 071537Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 CAPE TOWN 0914

EXDIS

7. IN RECENT DAYS THE SAG HAS BEEN MAKING EXTENSIVE USE OF THE RECENT WASHINGTON EDITORIAL CRITICAL OF OUR NEW SOUTHERN AFRICA POLICY IN AN EFFORT TO SHOW THAT THE POLICY DOES NOT HAVE PUBLIC BACKING IN THE US. SPECIAL EMPHASIS IS BEING PLACED ON THE CONTENTION THAT THE POLICY IS A PRODUCT OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S GUILT COMPLEX ON THE RACIAL PROBLEM IN THE SOUTH. SOME OF THE MOST SCURRILOUS JOURNALISM ON THIS ISSUE IS COMING FROM NEWS COMMENTATOR OF SABC. (SEE CAPE TOWN 916 AND CAPE TOWN 917)

8. WE SYMPATHIZE WITH THE DIFFICULTIES WHICH WHITE LIBERALS FACE IN OPERATING POLITICALLY IN SOUTH AFRICA. WE HOLD NO BRIEF, HOWEVER, FOR THEIR PRESENT DISCOMFORTURE OVER THEIR CONFIDENTIAL

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EQUIVOCAL STAND ON ONE-MAN ONE-VOTE. WE DO BELIEVE, NEVERTHELESS, THAT THE SAG'S PRESENT CAMPAIGN TO DISTORT THE VIENNA MESSAGE AND PORTRAY IT AS A HASTILY DEvised, ILL CONSIDERED EXPIATION FOR PAST RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN THE US SHOULD NOT GO UNANSWERED. CONTINUED SAG CONCENTRATION ON THIS ISSUE DISTORTS PUBLIC DISCUSSION, EXPLOITS RACIAL FEARS OF WHITES, AND UNDERMINES THOSE MODERATES, WHETHER AFRIKANER OR ENGLISH, WHO MIGHT BE INCLINED TO CALL FOR SOME CHANGES IN NATIONALIST POLICY.

9. IN LIGHT OF THE FOREGOING, I RECOMMEND THE DEPARTMENT DO THREE THINGS:

A. LOOK AT ALL DECISIONS BEARING ON SOUTH AFRICA (E.G. LICENSING OF EXPORTS, APPROVAL OF VISAS, GUIDANCE FOR NEWS BRIEFINGS) IN LIGHT OF WHETHER THEY CAN BE MISREAD BY THE SAG AS TEMPORIZING WITH THE BASIC POLICY SET FORTH AT VIENNA. WE SHOULD BE CAREFUL TO AVOID GIVING THE SAG SIGNALS WHICH IT IS ALL TOO PRONE TO MISREAD. AT THIS JUNCTURE, A CLEAR SIGNAL OF THE SERIOUSNESS OF OUR POLICY WOULD BE HELPFUL.

B. THE VISIT OF FOREIGN MINISTER BOTHA SHOULD BE

USED TO LET HIM KNOW IN NO UNCERTAIN TERMS THAT HIGHEST ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS ARE AWARE OF HOW VIENNA IS BEING DISTORTED FOR THE SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC BY SAG OFFICIALS (INCLUDING BOTHA) AND MEDIA, AND THAT WE REGARD THIS AS A DISSERVICE WHICH CAN ONLY HAVE DELITERIOUS EFFECTS ON OUR RELATIONS. BOTHA HAS BEEN THE PRINCIPAL SAG AGENT IN THE DISTORTION. I SUSPECT THE MAIN REASONS FOR HIS TRIP ARE: (A) TO DEMONSTRATE THAT HE HAS READY ACCESS TO THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF USG, (B) TO BRING BACK SOME "CLARIFICATION" OF WHAT THE USG MEANS BY ONE-MAN ONE-VOTE, AND (C) TO SPEAK TO HIS FRIENDS IN CONGRESS AND US BUSINESS ABOUT THE "UNREALITY" OF US POLICY. THIS SHOULD BE KEPT IN MIND IN GRANTING HIM APPOINTMENTS. GIVEN HIS ROLE IN THE DISTORTION OF VIENNA AND HOW HE MIGHT TRY TO USE HIGH LEVEL MEETINGS, I RECOMMEND
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THAT THE SECRETARY RECEIVE HIM TO CONVEY THE MESSAGE ABOUT THE SERIOUSNESS OF OUR POLICY AND OUR CONCERN OVER THE SAG RESPONSE. REQUESTS FOR WHITE HOUSE APPOINTMENTS SHOULD BE CAREFULLY EXAMINED IN THE LIGHT OF THE REASONS FOR THE TRIP MENTIONED ABOVE.

C. FIND AN EARLY OPPORTUNITY FOR A HIGH ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL (MCHENRY AND PETTERSON TELL ME THE SECRETARY HAS AN AFRICAN POLICY SPEECH UNDER CONSIDERATION) TO REITERATE OUR POLICY AS EXPLAINED BY VP MONDALE TO PM VORSTER IN VIENNA AND AS WAS SO CLEARLY STATED BY THE VICE PRESIDENT AT HIS PRESS CONFERENCE IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE TALKS. IN SO DOING WE NEED TO REFOCUS ON THE FUNDAMENTAL NEED FOR CHANGE IN SOUTH AFRICA BASED ON THE TWO PRINCIPLES OF DOING AWAY WITH APARTHEID AND FULL PARTICIPATION. IN CONNECTION WITH THE LATTER, IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO STATE THAT WE REGARD THE RIGHT OF EVERY ADULT TO VOTE AS A BASIC HUMAN RIGHT, WITH THE POLITICAL FRAMEWORK WITHIN WHICH ONE-MAN ONE-VOTE IS TO OPERATE A MATTER WHICH A COUNTRY MUST DECIDE FOR ITSELF ON THE BASIS OF CONSULTATION WITH ALL ITS PEOPLE.
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Message Attributes

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